

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

March 14, 2002

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We commend you for your firm stand against Palestinian terrorism and your resolute message that Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat must be held accountable for the free rein of terrorist groups. We urge you to take even stronger action by adding the Al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade, the Tanzim, and Force 17 to the U.S. list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations. These terrorist groups, which are militant elements of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), are responsible for fierce attacks against Israeli civilians and Americans living and visiting in Israel.

As you know, the Al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade has organized some of the most gruesome terrorist attacks in Israel. On December 12, 2001, Al-Aqsa Brigade terrorists staged a roadside ambush that killed 10 Israeli civilians and wounded 25. The terrorists targeted the bus with bombs and grenades before opening fire on the ambulances and security forces that came to their rescue. The Al-Aqsa Brigade has also taken credit for the January 17, 2002 attack on a reception hall where a gunman opened fire on guests of a young girl's Bat-Mitzvah, killing six Israelis and wounding dozens more. Several days later, on January 22, an Al-Aqsa Brigade gunman opened fire with an M-16 assault rifle near a bus stop on Jaffa Road in downtown Jerusalem in attack that left two women dead and 40 people injured. And on January 27 the Al-Aqsa Brigade deployed a female suicide bomber to detonate a bomb in downtown Jerusalem that killed an elderly grandfather and wounded over 150.

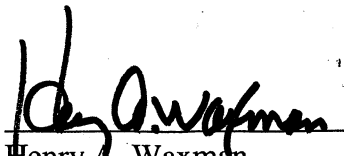
It is obvious, however, that the Al-Aqsa Brigade has not acted alone. Aside from coordinating with other Palestinian terrorist organizations, such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the organization is closely intertwined with the Tanzim militia, an armed wing of Fatah that is fueling terrorist cells across Palestinian cities and towns with illegal weapons, and training and materials for bomb making. Among other atrocities, the Tanzim is responsible for months of daily ambushes on civilian Israeli vehicles, shooting attacks on the Gilo neighborhood of Jerusalem, and the murder of American citizens. The organization has also directed illegal weapons smuggling and the recruitment of Palestinian youth to participate in violent demonstrations and terrorist attacks.


Similarly, Force 17, Yasser Arafat's Presidential Security forces, continues to lead terrorist operations, mortar attacks, sniper fire, and illegal weapons smuggling. Senior officers of Force 17 routinely gather intelligence for attacks and operate explosives labs for bomb preparation.


Deadly terrorist attacks in Israel have escalated to a daily basis and it is time to formally designate the Palestinian terrorist groups responsible for these attacks on the U.S. list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations. Doing so will demonstrate to these groups, those who direct them, and those who associate with or support them that the failure of these groups to conform their behavior to civilized norms has a price.


We appreciate your attention to this important issue and look forward to your response.


Sincerely,

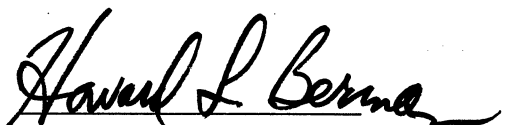

Henry A. Waxman
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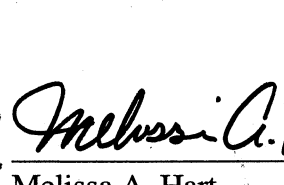

Tom Lantos
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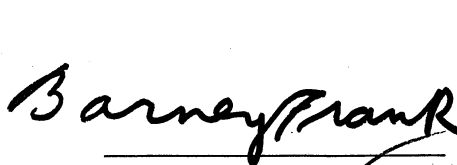

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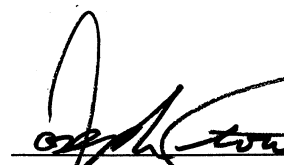

Howard L. Berman
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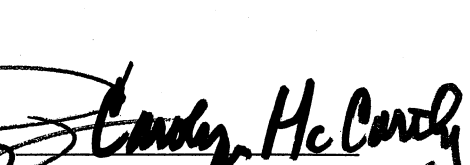

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Melissa A. Hart
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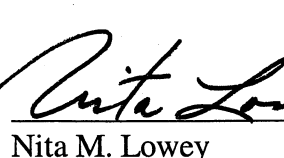

Eric Cantor
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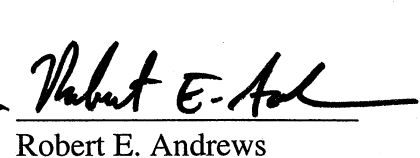

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